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An Essay      Definit  
on  
Rubella or Measles

Written for the  
Degree of Doctor of Medicine

In the  
University of Pennsylvania

By  
John W. Anderson  
of  
Hagerstown  
Maryland

Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> 1858

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## *Rubeola* or *Measles*

The measles is a genus of disease in the class Pyrexia, and order Exanthemata of Cullen's Nomenclature. He describes it as a disease originating in contagion and affecting persons but once in their lives. That it affects persons but once in their lives, is for the most part undeniable; but as to its contagious nature there is a diversity of opinion.

The best test for the contagious nature of a disease, is inoculation, and Dr. Home of Edinburgh, tells us that he succeeded in producing this disease by that means. The mode in which he effected this object, to his own satisfaction I suppose, was as follows. Not being able to procure matter in sufficient quantity from the subcutaneous eruption, he took blood from the most syphedical veins of that portion of the body where the papules were most abundant, with which he inoculated several persons some of whom took the disease. But he has not told us under what particular circumstances he inoculated

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those persons; in all probability the disease was prevalent at the time as an epidemic, and those very persons might have been exposed to the same disturbed atmosphere from whence the epidemic proceeded. I do not therefore think the experiment a fair one or at all sufficient to establish conclusively that measles is contagious. Admitting a virus to be generated, I think it extremely problematical that it is admitted into the blood vessels. A still further objection to the above experiment - If Dr. Thorne had said that he carried the blood to a distance quite beyond the sphere of the infected atmosphere (suppressing the rubulous discharges to have prevailed at the time, and he has not told us that it did not) and inoculated persons with it, that they took the disease and that it spread from them as from a centre of contagion, his experiment would then have been more plausible. I have no doubt that the "semina morbi" were planted in the bodies of those that took the disease, either before the insertion of the

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blood, a very soon after and not at the time -

The circumstance of a number of families or individuals of the same neighbourhood, at the same time or in succession, suffering from the measles, is not sufficient proof, as some have thought, that it is contagious, for if so, Intermittent Fever or any other atmospheric disease might be said to be so. Indeed it has so happened that almost every epidemic has been thought contagious at one time or other - arising, doubtless out of their extensive influence and ignorance of their remote cause. How often have we heard of the contagious nature of an common typhoid fever for whom they have been known, they have been productive of the greatest alarm, spreading a panic terror among the Profession, who at the name of Typhus, thought of nothing but contagion; with which it was strongly associated in their minds. And this is not only ~~only~~ a error in theory, but leads to errors in practice highly pernicious. The might instance Yellow Fever as another source of like errors -

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of a person affected with Syphilis, even  
with it inveterate others who would afterwards become  
syphilitic, would an enlightened Physician pronounce  
this an indigenous proof of exhalation? I presume not!  
He would only consider it a curious coincidence - yet  
I think the proof as strong in the one case as the other.

Contagion is a peculiar cause which under  
all circumstances in all places and at all times will  
produce a specific disease, namely, in the course, resembles  
the same specific species from whence it is derived. This we  
not have account of, Syphilis, as far as I know, and which  
more conclusive evidence still is wanted than I have  
seen here. I would rather believe the disease to have its  
origin in some peculiar condition of the atmosphere.

See the notes forwarded at all seasons, but more  
frequently in the winter and spring, and summer of  
all ages are liable to them. They are prevented like  
most other febrile diseases, by clothing, general warming  
with a long top of a white, diaphanous, to below, anorexia &c.

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and this condition of the system may continue for  
a longer or shorter time, until at last the eruption  
form makes its appearance, and is accompanied  
with heat, thirst, dryness of the mouth and fauces,  
uneasiness about the epigastrium, nausea and  
sometimes, pains in different parts of the body, and  
especially the head, back, and limbs, &c. With these  
symptoms only, which are common to fevers generally  
we could not say, with certainty, that the measles  
were about to appear, but were they accompanied  
at the same time, with swelling of the eyes, and  
a copious secretion of serum tears, and also with an  
acrid discharge from the nose, and a hoarse  
dry cough little doubt would be left that we  
were about to encounter an attack of Measles.

These symptoms usually continue some three  
or four days, when the eruption manifests appearance  
in the form of red papules about the face, neck  
with a slight elevation of the cuticle.

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Amesbury

Figure 1.1

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The rash continues for a few days extending more  
or less over the body and about the termination of  
a week or ten days from the commencement of the attack  
it loses its florid appearance and the peak off, but  
the skin does not regain its natural colour for  
some days.

The cough and fever do not always  
disappear with the subsidence of the other symptoms  
but on the contrary remain often unabated, and not  
unfrequently from the most serious part of the disease  
especially in scrophulous patients or when the disease  
often proves highly dangerous and even fatal - Saline  
is sometimes successful in removing them by a critical  
sweat or diarrhoea; but yielding so to do the most  
prompt and energetic treatment is demanded.

The more external forms of the disease  
might lead an inexperienced person to suppose  
that there is great simplicity and simplicity is the  
pathology of this disease - but this is not the case.





for the condition of the general circulation viz. that  
of particular parts, may be variously affected, and  
these various affections of the circulation constitute  
of its most striking peculiarities.

The disease has indeed a considerable range  
of character - in one season it will be mild - in another  
violent - in a third hold an intermediate course - and  
in a fourth, assume all the varieties from the mild  
to the most severe.

The cause of this diversity of type is  
just that the disease is sometimes accompanied with  
a mild excitement, which continues and terminates  
without producing any violent derangement. Secondly  
at other times, in its onset, advancement, or decline, it  
is accompanied with some congestion or inflammation  
which may terminate favourably or otherwise, according  
to the degree, time, or peculiar habit, which it may  
occur.

This disease is extensive with the other exanthemata

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has its origin in gastric irritation, which plainly accounts  
for those distressing symptoms, which attend the commence-  
ment of the disease; such as anorexia, nausea, fulness  
and tension about the epigastrium, acid eructa  
and flatulency &c. These signs occur themselves when the  
irritation is confined to the mucous lining of the Stomach.

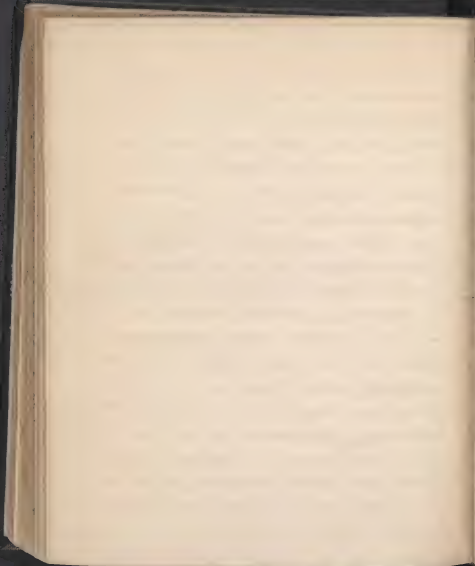
But the pain, from the external compression which  
exists between the stomach and the diaphragm, arising from  
inward action by metastases of the irritation, from  
the external to the internal surface, which metastases  
being complete the foregoing symptoms will be  
merged entirely in the collection of the virus.

But it now and then happens that the metas-  
tasis is incomplete the irritation coming to be  
divided between the Stomach and skin, which  
being the case the former organ will continue to  
be affected in a greater or less degree, and the  
eruption will be imperfect.

This is one of the moderatities of the



disease in which typhoid symptoms may appear  
if the stomach is not soon relieved, the irritability  
of this organ will be aggravated, the pulse become  
small, quick and irregular, excessive thirst, delirium,  
and coma supervene, and in fine all the disturbing  
symptoms which constitute a prodigiously distress-  
ing ague - the stomach may be completely relieved of  
every untoward symptom by the complete establishment  
of the eruption, yet, if it should by any means be  
made to disappear or be cold, the irritation may  
be translated again to the stomach, and a  
recurrence of all those alarming symptoms peculiar  
to this organ when irritated or inflamed will again  
disturb the patient. Ague - The violence of the  
remote cause may be such as to overthrow the  
vital energy of the system so that reaction will  
fail to take place and a collapse of the  
system will supervene, accompanied with all its  
frequent phenomena, such as, cold surface, partial



constant sweats, much smart and giddiness, insensibility, delirium, excessive irritability of Stomach, collapse countenance &c. And if these are not soon overcome by appropriate remedies we will find the pulse become irregular; vomiting of a foul dark matter from the stomach, resembling coffee grounds, involuntary discharge of urine and *hemorrhoidal tenderness*, convulsions and death.

The disease is commonly mildest in summer when the weather is moderate; and most severe in winter and spring when it is cold and variable.

It is also so much influenced by the peculiar habit in which it occurs, that all its varieties may generally be seen in persons of the same family or neighbourhood.

It would be well in unfavorable weather, to guard even strong children against cold during the prevalence of measles; as these precautions together with a light and simple diet





might do much to prevent serious attacks. The danger will always be greater in those persons, who, previously to an attack, labour under some internal disease or predisposition to it, and especially if that predisposition or disease be seated in the pulmonary, & Digestive organs; for in such cases, the weight of the disease will in all probability fall upon the weakened part. On this account persons of this description ought if possible, <sup>to</sup> keep from the sphere of the affected atmosphere, that they may escape the chance <sup>of</sup> ~~being~~ infected, until a more favourable time. If this cannot be done, the system should be prepared for the probable reception of the disease, and as soon as its effects begin to be developed, the greatest care should be taken to ward off any threatening of mischief in a vital organ.

If her children have suffered from some previous disease, the tone of the system is sometimes so much impaired, that it would be improper to

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venture upon any very active measures when they  
are attacked with Measles. Under such circumstances  
it would be better, by diligent attention, to detect the  
first symptoms and endeavour to counteract their  
tendency by a purgative, topical bleeding by cups  
and leeches and a blister over the affected part.  
And if the heat of the body be irregular, the warm  
bath will be highly useful in diffusing a more  
equable circulation and temperature. If these  
measures be not carried too far they will be well  
borne, and may preserve the threatened organ from  
a serious attack; whereas more active ones might  
be very injurious by depriving the general powers,  
preventing the development of an equable excitement, and  
inducing extreme irritation of the nervous system.  
But in vigorous constitutions where there is rather  
weakness than, nervous disease, colder measures  
may be taken when any of the viscera seem to suffer  
from congestion. Here evacuation will be highly

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Amesbury 7. 1. 1881

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$$G_{\alpha}^{\beta} = \frac{1}{\alpha!} \frac{\partial^{\alpha}}{\partial x^{\alpha}} f(x) \Big|_{x=\beta}$$

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useful by which means such congestion will be more speedily overcome than by any other - But this is not to be solely relied on: it should be sometimes assisted by the warm bath and followed by active purging blisters, and tepid drinks to determine to the surface.

The same disease is not always accompanied with the same concurrence of symptoms, and indeed they may be so modified by contingent circumstances as to indicate almost opposite modes of treatment and that practitioner will be most uniformly successful who, guided by a sound judgment, prescribes appropriate remedies, not for the name, but for the more prominent symptoms of a disease as they arise.

We occasionally see persons among the lower class of society left to the natural course of the disease without the assistance of art, in whom it appears to terminate without any very evident signs of inflammation of the external organs having been induced - But although this may be the happy termination of most



cases yet, we are not to infer that such will always  
be the case; or that inflammations may not supervene and  
dangerously complicate the case. Therefore it would  
be safer even in these mild forms of the disease to  
adopt the sparsist plan. For though the excitement  
at first be apparently slight, yet, it might gradually  
gain ground, and materially disorder the function, and  
perhaps the organization of some important organ, and  
that life will be most likely to suffer, which is in  
the highest state of predisposition. If this part should  
be the mucous lining of the Bronchia, we will have  
symptoms of Croup. If the mucous coat of the Stomach  
gastroitis, if of the bowels diarrhoea. If of the Pleura  
pleurisy and in line continue throughout the different  
lives. The liver may also share its part in these affections.

It has vomiting or sickness continue after the  
coming out of the eruption some abdominal irritation  
or inflammation may be suspected and a diarrhoea  
or occasional griping pains occurring at this period or





quicker proofs that irritation or inflammation do exist.  
But the surest signs of such affections, are pain, swelling or purpura, flatulency of the stomach and bowels, and unnatural appearance of the stools. And if pain or swelling exist in the right or left Hypochondrium, we may infer that the Liver or Spleen is affected.

There are often clear marks of cerebral febrile before the appearance of the eruption, but these usually disappear as it takes place, so that inflammation of the brain rarely supervenes, unless the eruption suddenly strikes in, as it is commonly called. If it should disappear before the usual time, and great anxiety, delirium and coma or convulsions ensue, the indication will be to restore the eruption to the skin as quickly as possible. For which which purpose ex. warm bath, hot fomentations, blisters, wine and water, carbonate of ammonia, ether, and Antimonial would be proper.

There can be little doubt that more or less congestion attends the first storm stage of all febrile diseases, and that

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the subsequent reaction of the heart and arteries is the natural cure of such congestion. None of the efforts of nature could always be depended on for bringing about this reaction and if it was always united to the removal of the previous congestion this would be a cure for the interference of art. But this is not the case, the excitement is often so excessive as to require the interference of art to moderate it otherwise it would perpetuate salutory limits and produce organic derangements of the excessively congested vessels.

A human occasionally happens that the efforts of nature are too feeble to create the stage of reaction from the great degree of excitation occasioned by the congestion so far exhausting the recuperative powers that reaction cannot be instituted, and without the assisting assistance of art the patient must soon sink under the most dangerous modification of the disease.

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The treatment of such a case depends on the character of its symptoms. If the case be simple, and the excitement moderate, the mildest treatment will be sufficient. Carefully keeping the bowels open with mild laxatives, with warm beverages, to act on the skin, the patient being confined to bed and the temperature of the body regulated.

But should the fever prove violent producing pain in particular parts, no treatment should be rigorous or proportion to the importance of organs concerned. And above all other remedies we should resort to bloodletting. In the commencement of all inflammatory diseases it is a measure that will rarely ever be regretted. But when general bloodletting is resorted to, even late whatever cause of recovery remains may be extinguished by such a measure, viz in the last stage of inflammatory diseases the energy of the heart and action and pulsation of the circulatory system is so much exhausted by the previous excitement that general



Bleedletting at that time, would have little or no influence on the local character but might even fatally and actually overpower the system. If venesection is indicated and the patient is more than five years old bleedletting should be carried on far as to make a decided impression on the local affection. One large and well timed bleeding will do more good than half a dozen smaller ones which would in the end only exhaust the system without checking the disease. But it is a very rare point to bleed children judiciously when they are attacked with several inflammations. In the young constitution there is a more intimate sympathetic connexion between the vascular and nervous systems than is observed in the more mature; so that a much greater degree of irritation is produced by a system of irritation on the former than in the latter. In the case of the old more mature reaction is more decided and generally more extensive than in the young. The inflammatory affection of young











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During convalescence from the Measles patients should not be suffered to expose themselves to a cold and changeable atmosphere, particularly such as are predisposed to pulmonary complaints. For though they be apparently fast recovering, if they imprudently expose themselves, either to some other serious affection may supervene and prove dangerous or destructive. A light and cooling diet should also be pursued in for some time; for if a full and stimulating one be allowed, it will be almost sure to derange the digestive organs. If these precautions were strictly observed, much subsequent mischief might be prevented and the system restored to its pristine health and vigour. Moderate exercise in pleasant weather might also be indulged in either in a carriage or on horseback the latter though I think is to be preferred. Fatigue should never be induced.

That Measles as we may they will sometimes prove fatal in spite of an exertions, either

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in its acute stage, or by its sequelae, such as  
Phthisis Pulmonalis, Pleurisy of any of the  
internal cavities, as Ascites, Hydrothorax, Hydrocephalus  
interius &c or by chronic inflammation of some  
of the viscera, which terminates in disorganization which  
no skill in an art can repair.